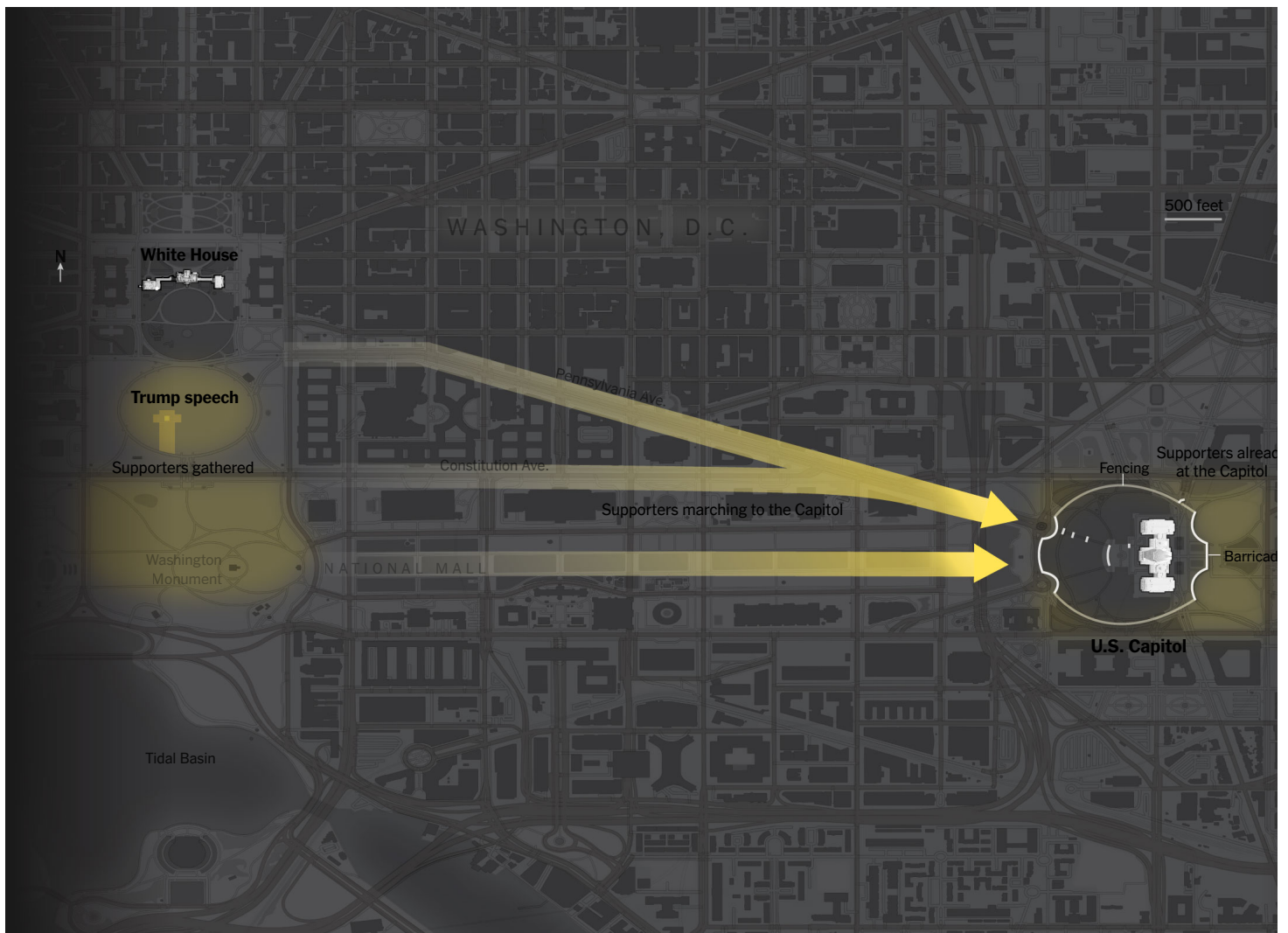


VISUAL INVESTIGATIONS

How a Presidential Rally Turned Into a Capitol Rampage

By Lauren Leatherby, Arielle Ray, Anjali Singhvi, Christiaan Triebert, Derek Watkins and
Haley Willis Jan. 12, 2021

When President Trump railed against the election results from a stage near the White House on Wednesday, his loyalists were already gathering at the Capitol. Soon, they would storm it. We analyzed a crucial two-hour period to reconstruct how a rally gave way to a mob that nearly came face to face with Congress.



The day's events were captured by protesters and witnesses who live-streamed the action or posted the scenes on social media. The footage shows the simultaneous and alternating perspectives of Mr. Trump at the podium, the lawmakers inside the Capitol and the swelling numbers — and growing violence — of the rioters on the ground.

Before Noon

A Brewing Storm



President Trump prepares to go onstage.



Supporters gather at the Capitol.

For weeks, Mr. Trump had urged his supporters to go to Washington to stop the certification of the election results, and several simultaneous rallies were planned for Wednesday.

As the morning arrives, hundreds assemble on the Capitol lawn, more than a mile away from where Trump will soon speak near the White House. Among them are the Proud Boys, a far-right group, identifiable here by their orange hats.

11:50 a.m. East side of Capitol

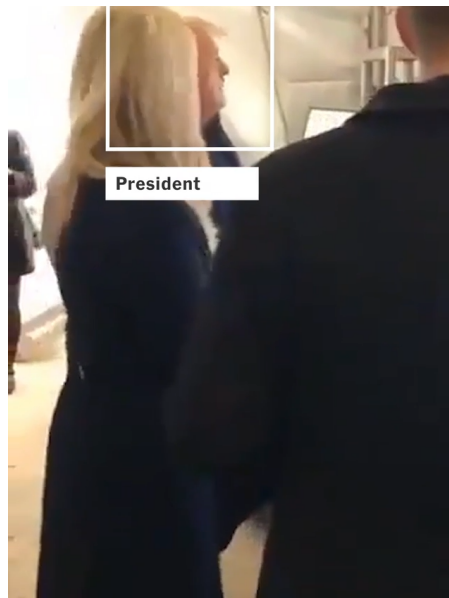


Amanda Andrade-Rhoades/For The Washington Post via Getty Images

At the same time, near the White House, Donald Trump Jr. films the president and his inner circle backstage before his father's speech. In a video uploaded to his Facebook page, they are listening to the song "Gloria" and marveling at the size of the crowd.

11:54 a.m. South of White House





Donald Trump Jr. via Facebook

12:15 p.m. – 12:50 p.m.

Capitol Crowds Grow



Trump calls for march on Capitol.



A large crowd heads in that direction.

About 15 minutes into his speech, Mr. Trump tells rally attendees to walk to the Capitol. “You have to show strength,” he says.

At this moment, the Capitol grounds are protected by temporary perimeter fences, and there are few officers equipped to defend them.

12:17 p.m. South of White House





U.S. Network Pool

Supporters leave the rally in a steady stream before Mr. Trump's speech ends, and they head toward the Capitol.

12:29 p.m. Constitution Ave.



Talia Jane via Twitter

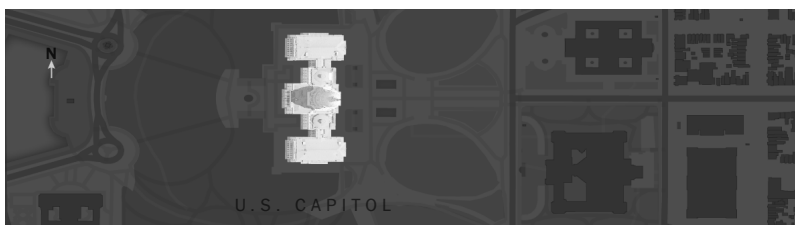
As they arrive, another crowd of Trump supporters that has already gathered along the west perimeter fence becomes more agitated.

12:49 p.m. West of the Capitol grounds



Status Coup via Storyful

Around this time, a pipe bomb is reported at the Republican National Committee building, just a block away from the Capitol. Not long after, another device is discovered nearby at the Democratic National Committee headquarters.





12:53 p.m.–1:03 p.m.

First Barriers Breached



Trump continues speaking.



Rioters topple a fence to the Capitol's west.



Congress begins joint session.

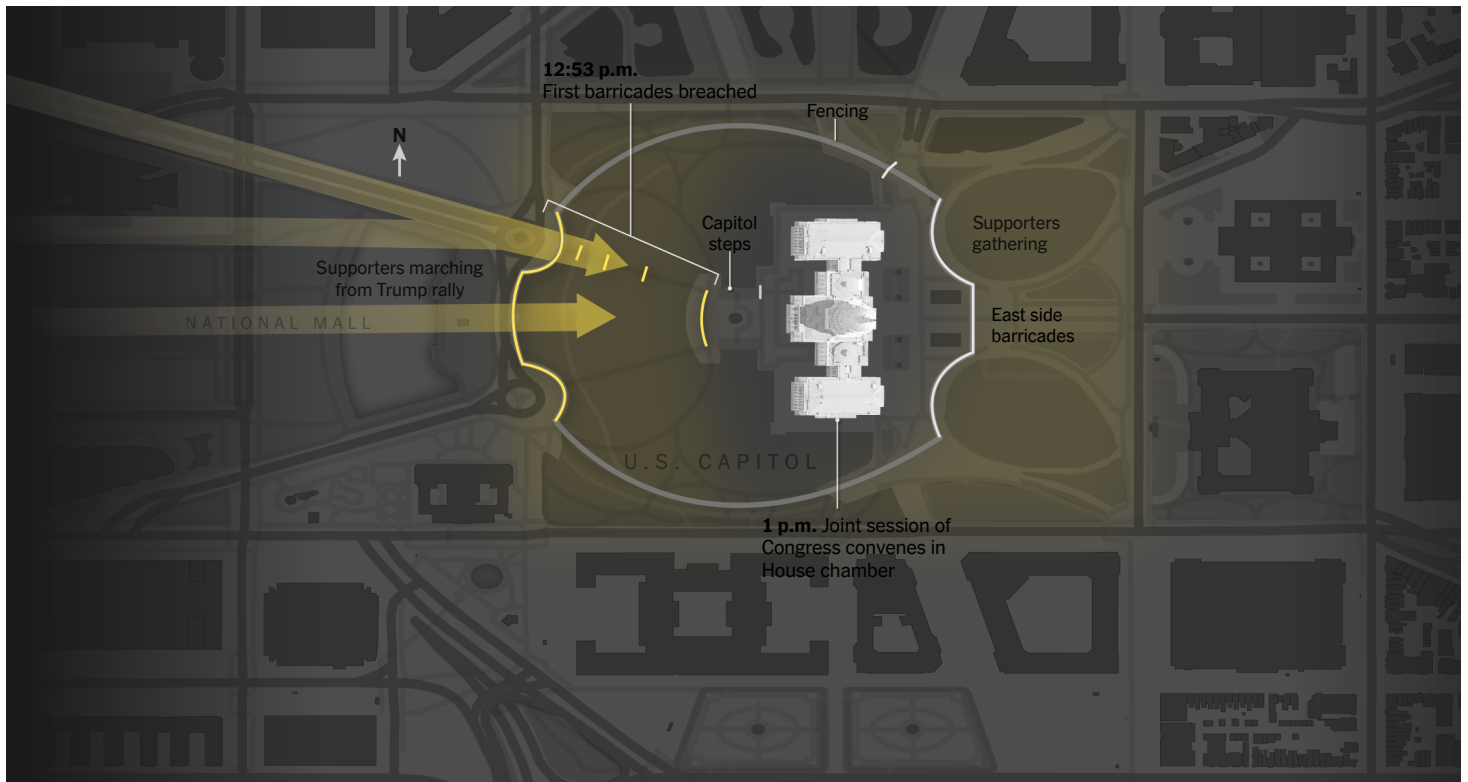
About 20 minutes before Trump's speech ends, some people in the Capitol crowd harass officers posted at the barricades and start to get physical. Others follow suit, until they violently overwhelm the police and breach the building's outer perimeter.

12:53 p.m. Northwest side of the Capitol



Elijah Schaffer via Twitter

The mob quickly breaks through three additional barricades, forcing officers back onto the west Capitol steps.



- 1 **12:53 p.m.** First barricades breached.
- 2 **1 p.m.** Joint session of Congress convenes in House chamber.

Once at the steps, the group clashes with a small contingent of officers. After a few minutes, Capitol Police officers in riot gear arrive to help control the crowd.

12:58 p.m. West side of Capitol



Status Coup via Storyful

At this time, the speaker of the House, Nancy Pelosi, begins the proceedings to certify the Electoral College vote at a joint session of Congress, alongside Vice President Mike Pence.

Outside, the chants begin: “Whose house? Our house!”

1:03 p.m. House Chamber





C-SPAN

1:12 p.m.–2:00 p.m.

Trump's Call to Action



Trump again calls for a march on the Capitol.



Mob continues to clash with police.



Ted Cruz objects to certification.

As Mr. Trump's speech comes to an end, he calls on his supporters to "walk down Pennsylvania Avenue" toward the Capitol. Rioters there continue to violently clash with officers, including reinforcements from the local police department who have arrived on the scene. Both sides spray chemical agents.

1:15 p.m. West side of Capitol



Status Coup via Storyful

Inside the Capitol, members of Congress seem unaware of the extent of the violence outside. The House and Senate have moved to their separate chambers to debate certifying the vote. Senator Ted Cruz, Republican of Texas, argues that the Senate should not certify Arizona's electoral votes.

1:48 p.m. Senate Chamber



C-SPAN

A minute later, Chief Steven Sund of the Capitol Police makes the request for immediate assistance from the D.C. National Guard. Outside, rioters tear through scaffolding in front of the Capitol's northwest steps and make their way closer to the building.

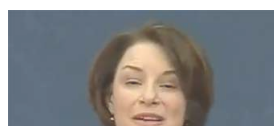
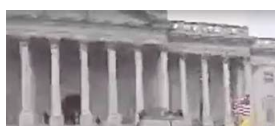
1:50 p.m. West side of Capitol



Lev Radin/Pacific Press/LightRocket via Getty Images

Around 2 p.m.

Assault on the East Side



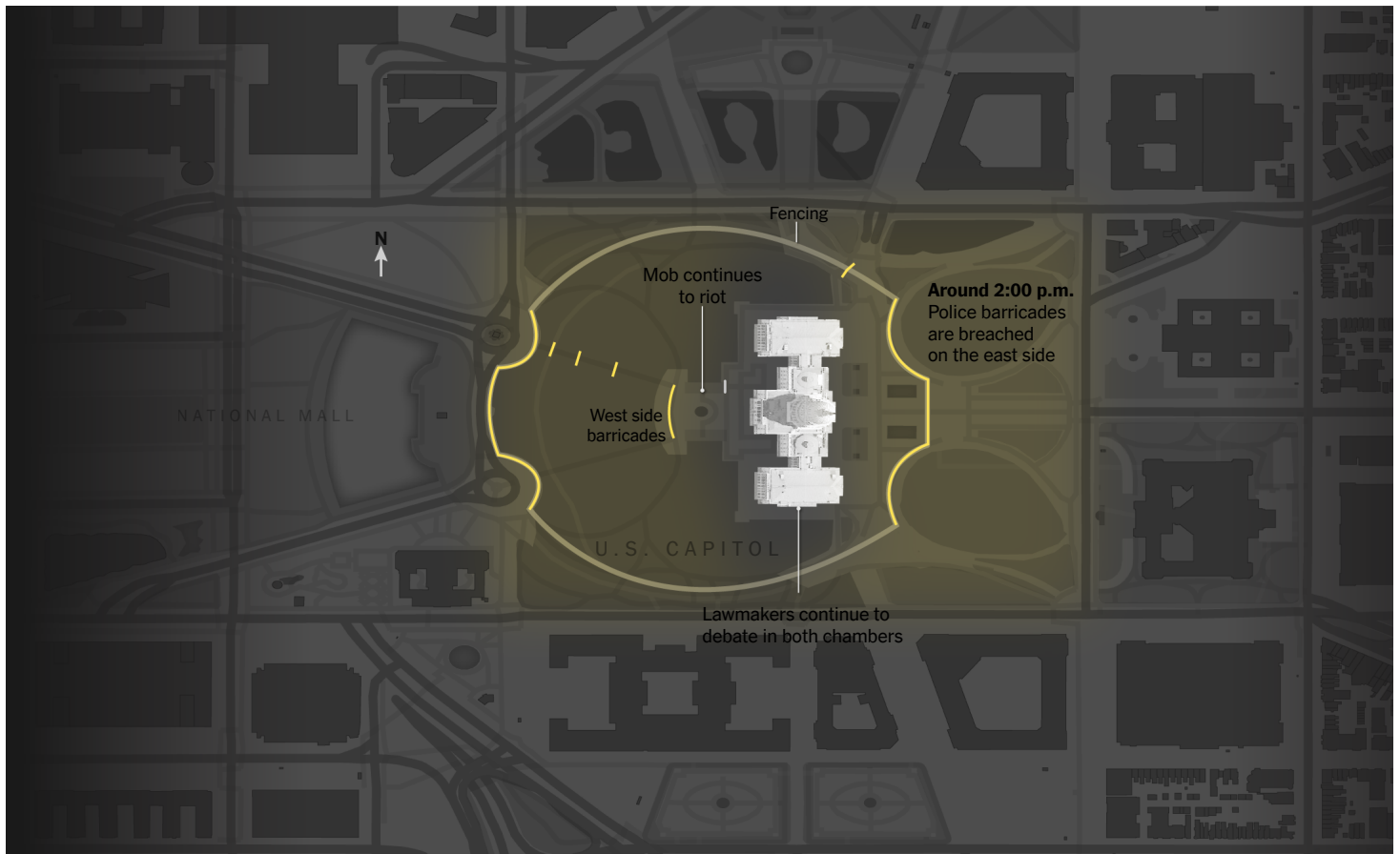


Groups breach police barricades.



Amy Klobuchar and other legislators debate.

On the east side of the Capitol, where the police presence is much smaller, another mob is about to reach the doors of the building.



- 1 **Around 2:00 p.m.** Police barricades are breached on the east side
- 2 Lawmakers continue to debate in both chambers
- 3 Mob continues to riot

The police remove a barricade at the northeast corner of the building after violent confrontations between officers and the crowd.

1:58 p.m. Northeast side of Capitol





Marcus DiPaola via TikTok

A YouTube live stream captures the exact moment a massive crowd also breaches a separate, larger barricade on the east side. This is the last physical barrier protecting that side of the Capitol.

2:00 p.m. East side of Capitol



Stephen Ignoramus via YouTube

2:10 p.m.

Mob Reaches Doors on West Side



Group breaches west side barricades.



Legislators continue debate.

Back on the northwest side of the Capitol, another YouTube livestream captures the mob chasing officers up the steps and breaching the final barrier on that side.

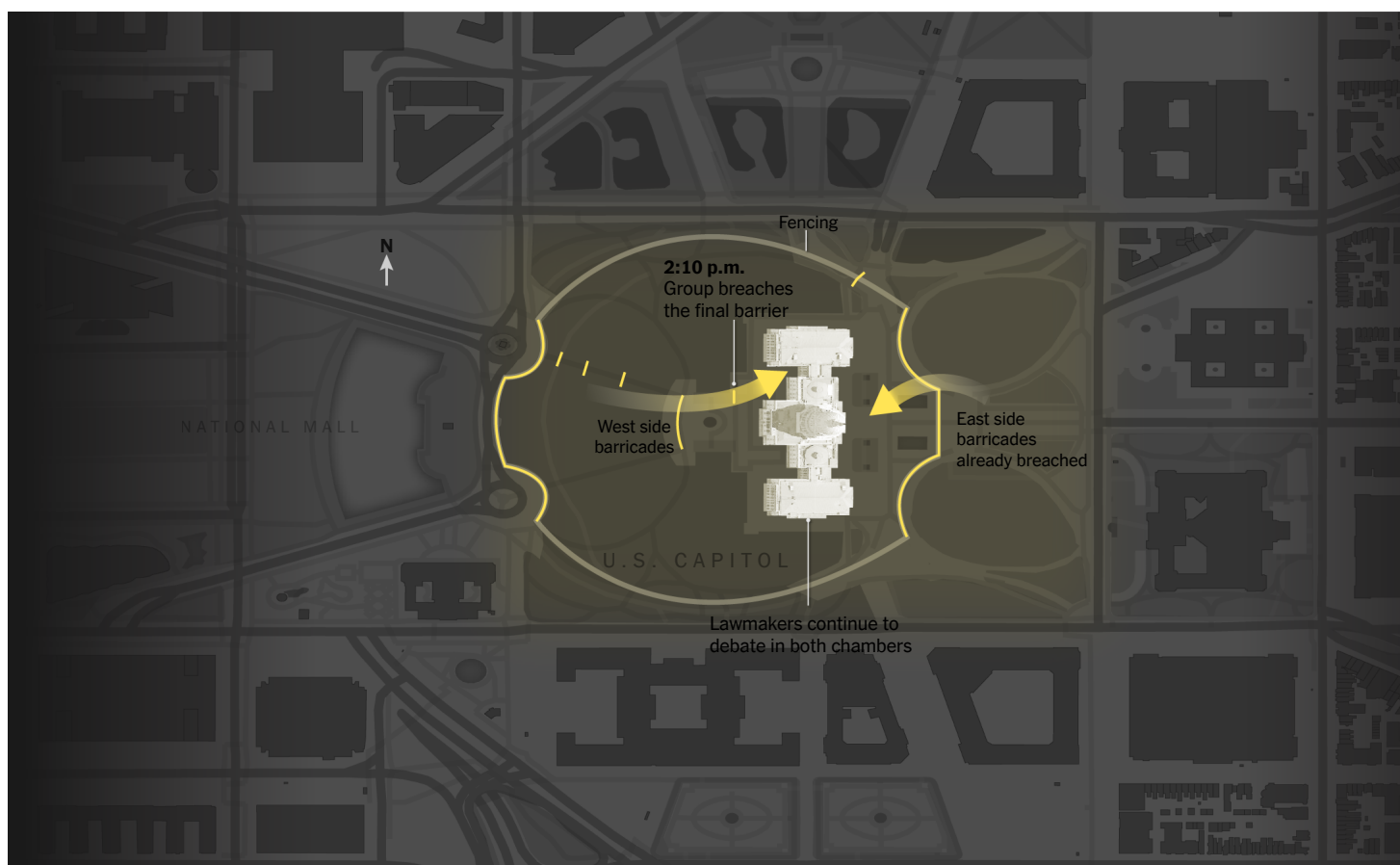
2:10 p.m. Northwest side of Capitol



John Sullivan via YouTube

Violent clashes with the police have been ongoing for more than an hour by the time the mob finally breaks through.

The mob approaches an entrance near the Senate chamber, one floor below where senators continue to debate.



1 2:10 p.m. Group breaches the final barrier on the west side

2 Lawmakers continue to debate

Rioters surround the building on both sides, but there's no indication that the lawmakers inside know the extent of the breach. As the mob approaches the doors of the Senate wing, Senator Kyrsten Sinema, Democrat of Arizona, urges her colleagues to "reject this meritless challenge and uphold the will of Arizona's voters."

2:10 p.m. Senate Chamber



C-SPAN

Around 2:11 p.m. to 2:16 p.m.

Rioters Break Into the Building



Mob enters the building.

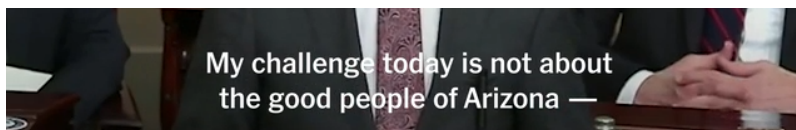


Senators continue debate just steps away.

Rioters on the west side break into the building around 2:11 p.m. Two minutes later, as they reach the stairs next to the Senate chamber, the Senate is called into recess.

2:13 p.m. Senate Chamber





C-SPAN

Rioters continue to stream into the building. They enter through a door and a broken window on the northwest side.

2:15 p.m. Northwest side of Capitol



John Sullivan via YouTube

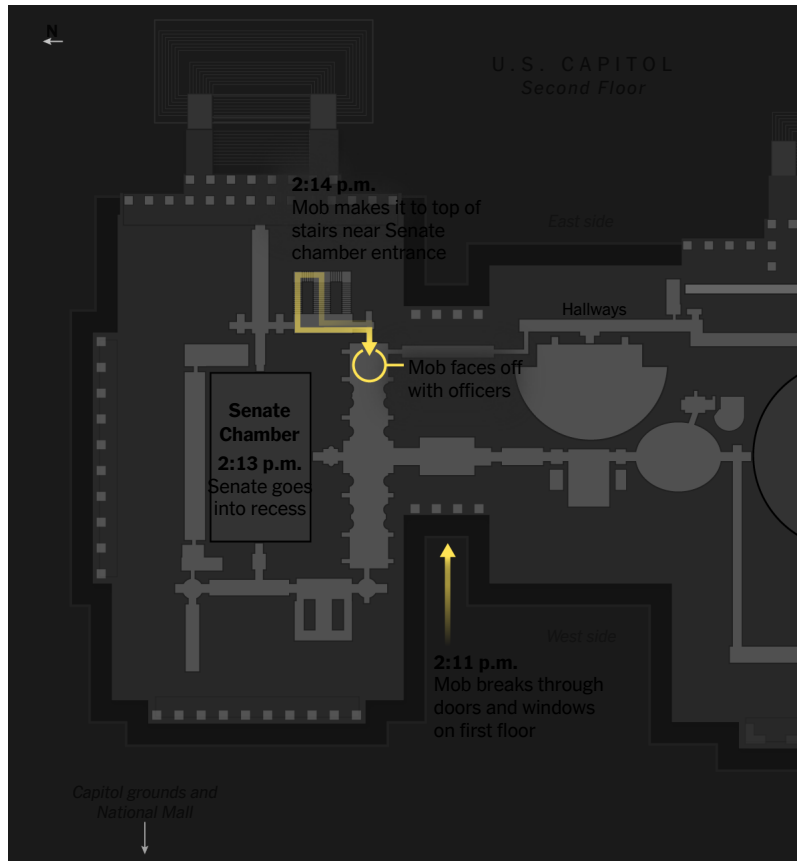
Rioters chase an officer to the top of a staircase where there are entrances to the Senate chamber in both directions.

2:14 p.m. Inside the Capitol



Igor Bobic/HuffPost via Storyful

The officer leads the rioters one way, and backup arrives — while the police inside the chamber are still trying to lock the doors.



- 1 **2:11 p.m.** Mob breaks through doors and windows on first floor
- 2 **2:13 p.m.** Senate goes into recess
- 3 **2:14 p.m.** Mob makes it to top of stairs near Senate chamber entrance
- 4 Mob faces off with officers

Now rioters stand off with the police in the hall, feet away from the entrance to the Senate chamber. Senators are still milling about inside.

2:16 p.m. Hall outside Senate chamber



Win McNamee/Getty Images

After the breach

The Siege Continues



Thousands reach the Capitol.



Congress is halted.

More than five minutes after the first rioters break into the building, the House also goes into recess. Now, the police are clashing with the mob inside the building as some members of Congress are able to evacuate. Others are trapped inside while rioters pound on the doors.

Outside the building, the crowd grows as attendees from President Trump's rally continue to stream in. The mob becomes more violent, dragging and beating officers.

Three hours will pass before the sergeant-at-arms declares the building secure.

2:19 p.m. Near Capitol grounds on the west side



Jim Lo Scalzo/EPA, via Shutterstock

Photo credits: John Minchillo/Associated Press; Andrew Harnik/Associated Press; Olivier Douliery/Agence France-Presse; Greg Nash/Pool via Reuters

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